

To:

Dentists

HMOs and Other  
Managed Care  
Programs

## State plans Medicaid dental pilot program

Goals for the new program include increasing dentists' participation and improving recipient dental health.

Improved dental health care for Medicaid recipients is the goal of a new program to be piloted in Ashland, Douglas, Bayfield, and Iron counties in August 1999.

The new dental program will be based on a reimbursement model developed and proposed by the Wisconsin Dental Association (WDA) in collaboration with local dentists. The Division of Health Care Financing (DHCF) is developing the pilot dental program in cooperation with the WDA.

The pilot program's objectives and goals are to:

- Increase access to dental care in the four target counties for all Medicaid recipients.
- Reduce the number of emergency visits to dental offices and hospital emergency rooms.
- Create a collaborative atmosphere among community agencies and organizations, the dental community, health departments, and the state.
- Guarantee access to emergency dental care.
- Increase dental provider participation in Medicaid.
- Establish an advisory committee to assist in planning the dental pilot.

This project is the newest Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) initiative aimed at increasing participation in Medicaid by dentists, improving outreach to Medicaid recipients, and educating recipients about the importance of dental care and keeping appointments.

In the October 1997 issue of the WDA Journal, Dr. Loren Swanson, former president of the WDA, said of the pilot program: "If successful, [the program] could become a model for the delivery of dental health services to the Medicaid population throughout the entire state." Swanson added that the program is expected to reduce administrative overhead from 45% to about 12%, leaving more funds available for direct patient care.

The program does not have a specified time frame. However, the DHFS will measure the program's success and may consider expanding the model to other counties or statewide.

The pilot program's objectives include improving access to dental care for Medicaid recipients and educating them about the importance of preventive care.

The Wisconsin Medicaid Update is the first source for provider information including Medicaid policy and billing information.

Wisconsin Medicaid is administered by the Division of Health Care Financing, Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, P.O. Box 309, Madison, WI 53701-0309.